

## INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

New Military Fort, Taklakhar

1. In late May there was a new fort at Taklakhar (N 30-15, E 81-10) on the west side of the Karnali River.<sup>1</sup> The main approach to the fort was via a well-constructed bridge across the Karnali. The bridge was made of steel girders surfaced with a triple layer of heavy wooden planks. The fort was approximately one half-mile to the north of the western end of the bridge.
2. The fort, situated on the top of a hill about 500 feet above the river, was approximately two miles from the old Taklakhar fort, which was on the opposite side of the river. In May the Chinese Communists were using the old fort as a storage place and arms magazine.
3. The new fort was oblong in shape and about three miles in circumference. The entire area was enclosed by a masonry wall six feet high and approximately four miles in circumference.<sup>2</sup> This wall was surrounded by barbed wire seven feet high and 15 feet deep.<sup>2</sup> There were sentry boxes every 15 yards.<sup>3</sup>
4. The walls of the fort itself were 25 to 30 feet high and 6 to 8 feet thick. The walls were of stone and cement. There were watchtowers about 50 feet high at each of the four corners of the fort, and sentry posts about every 50 yards around the circumference of the fort.<sup>3</sup> After dark the towers were illuminated by very powerful lights.
5. The main gate of the fort was made of iron and was on the east side of the fort. It was 12 feet high and 9 feet thick.<sup>2</sup> Within the fort there were four major barracks for housing troops. A total of approximately 4,000 troops could be accommodated in these barracks.
6. Other buildings within the fort included the following:
  - a. Three storehouses for material.
  - b. One storehouse.

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(Note: Washington distribution indicated by "X"; Field distribution by "#")

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

25X1

- 2 -

c. One special stronghold room (sic).

7. The parade or drill ground was located in the center of the fort. It was about 60 or 70 feet (sic).
8. The kitchen and mess were about 250 yards from the fort. The kitchen consisted of four large rooms; the mess consisted of eight halls. A vegetable truck garden was maintained within the fort and was cared for by the soldiers.

#### Security and Defense

9. Sentry posts were at both ends of the bridge over the Karnali River. Only Chinese Communist military personnel and a few others granted special passes of limited validity were permitted to cross the bridge. Civilians carrying special passes were detained at the bridge long enough to be searched thoroughly by the sentry. Civilians were subjected to this search each time they crossed the bridge regardless of how many times a day they used the bridge. There was another checkpoint about 250 yards beyond the bridge enroute to the fort.
10. Four soldiers were on duty at the main gate at all times. A pass was necessary to gain entrance to the fort. Even during the construction period non-Chinese laborers were not used for work within the fort.
11. During darkness the Chinese Communists illuminated the inside and the outer perimeter of the fort with what appeared to be a brilliant gas-burning lighting system. The light was very bright and caused considerable awe among the local Tibetan inhabitants.
12. There were 12 antiaircraft positions around the fort. Other antiaircraft positions were in the surrounding hills. Other types of artillery were in place within the fort.

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#### Motorized Military Equipment, Taklakhar Area

13. Approximately 40 motor trucks mounting cannons were brought to and assembled in Khojarnath (N 30-10, E 81-20) during the winter of 1954-1955. The cannons mounted on the trucks were long and measured eight to nine inches at the muzzles. Occasionally some of these trucks were seen on the road between Khojarnath and Taklakhar.

#### Airstrip and Aircraft, Taklakhar

14. There was an airstrip about one mile from the fort. It was on the same side of the river as the fort and about one half-mile south of the bridge that leads to the fort. The airstrip has a well-constructed runway approximately 13,000 to 15,000 feet long and about 30 to 40 feet wide. There was a taxi area about 800 feet long and 35 feet wide surfaced with wooden planks.<sup>4</sup>

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C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

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25X1

- 3 -

15. A Chinese military aircraft landed once every two or three weeks during the summer season only. It normally carried supplies. According to rumors in the area, the aircraft flew in from Sikang Province.

Comments

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25X1

1. Source previously reported this fort
2. Source probably meant that the barbed wire was 15 feet wide and that the iron gate was 9 feet wide.
3. the perimeter of the fort was guarded by four soldiers at all times.
4. Source reported this field the runway had a concrete surface and was approximately 100 to 125 feet wide. The estimate in this report that the runway was about 13,000 to 15,000 feet long appears to be exaggerated; the width of the runway, 30 to 40 feet, is too narrow.

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